

November 8, 1948

TO : Office Directors
FROM : OLI - Col. George R. Fearing, Jr.
SUBJECT: Field Distribution of CIA (SO) Reports.

CIA information reports in the SO series (yellow sheets) distributed in Washington often bear the stamp "Distributed to your representative in the Field" or "Distributed to State in the Field." This statement means only that the information contained in the report in question has been made available to the Chief of Mission in the country in which the report originated. If the report deals with countries other than that of origin, or in addition to that of origin, it cannot be assumed from the stamp that the information has been distributed to other missions.

However, it often happens that the information actually has been passed to other missions. From that fact the question has been raised on numerous occasions as to whether CIA Washington cannot show exactly what additional distribution has been made so that members of the Department may know immediately whether CIA information need be relayed to the field.

When collateral distribution is made in the field by CIA it is made from CIA representative to CIA representative and from the point of view of operational interest. Field reports as they are received in Washington show this collateral intra-agency field distribution but they cannot show collateral distribution to the Department's representatives, for such further dissemination is dependent upon conditions prevailing in the individual missions and may or may not have been made.

It is not and cannot be the responsibility of CIA field representatives to disseminate information to other missions for they may not be, and indeed often are not, in a position to judge the importance of certain information to a given mission. This often can safely be done only in Washington where the information thus received can be evaluated and correlated with information from other sources.

Any problem arising from the procedures outlined above can, however, be simply resolved here in the Department. Inasmuch as CIA reports or information contained in CIA reports should not, in any case, be transmitted to the field without clearance it can be quickly determined at the time clearance is obtained (a) whether the report has been given any collateral field distribution, (b) whether distribution was made to the CIA representative at the mission in question; and (c) whether distribution should be made by the Department or whether distribution can be more rapidly, more effectively, more securely or more economically made by CIA representatives in the field.

CIA is both willing and eager to cooperate in every way on this matter but is of the firm opinion that, under present operating conditions, the system now in effect is as satisfactory as any that can be devised.

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Any questions concerning distribution of CIA reports as well as requests for clearance should be referred to the Department's CIA liaison officer, Mr. [redacted] extension 4603.

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Approved: Mr. Moore - OB

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file 0430018-7